DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 120 055 SO 008 957

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TITLE Comparing Political Experiences (CPE).
INSTITUTION American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C.; Social Studies Development Center, Bloomington, Ind.
SPONS AGENCY National Science Foundation, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE [75]
NOTE 24p.; For related documents, see ED 110 350 and SO 008 958-972

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *American Government (Course); Civics; *Course Descriptions; Course Evaluation; Course Objectives; *Course Organization; Curriculum Development; Grade 12; *Political Issues; *Political Science; Politics; Secondary Education; Skill Development; Social Studies Units
IDENTIFIERS *Comparing Political Experiences; High School Political Science Curriculum Project

ABSTRACT

The rationale, goals, curriculum components, instructional strategies, and curriculum development process of a two-semester, secondary-level political science course, "Comparing Political Experiences," are described in this paper. Developed as part of the High School Political Science Curriculum Project at Indiana University, the major purpose of the course is to build political competence in students by teaching them political knowledge and skills necessary to participate effectively in political activities. The instructional materials include two semesters of course work for 12th-grade students. "The Political Systems," a first-semester course, focuses on key concepts such as political systems, experiences, resources, and activities. It also presents basic skills in analyzing political life and participating in political groups. The "Political Issues" second-semester course offers an in-depth documentary study of four common, political experiences and an opportunity for students to extend and refine their skills. The teaching methods of the curriculum stress active-inquiry learning, often with documentary case studies and programmed exercises. Field testing, revisions, evaluation, and diffusion activities of the materials are also described. (Author/DE)

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COMPARING POLITICAL EXPERIENCES

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COMPARING POLITICAL EXPERIENCES

It was Tuesday morning. Catherine McGuire had a decision to make. She wanted to vote in the Central City election, but she was undecided about who to vote for as her City Council representative. She wished she had more information. She knew that Steve Saunders wanted better city schools. So did Catherine, for she felt education was crucial for her own children. The incumbent, Elliot Baines, wanted to build low-income housing units. Catherine lived in a housing project and knew that more housing was badly needed. However she would choose, it would be her decision.

A few weeks later, Catherine decided to attend a City Council meeting. The Council was debating a motion to build new schools. Councilman Saunders had been elected and spoke eloquently in favor of school construction. Catherine was happy she had voted for him. The Council vote was 24-5 in favor of Saunders' proposal.

About a month later, the Council debated the question of constructing new low-income housing units. Catherine read in the newspaper that former councilman Baines' proposal was defeated. The vote was 14 in favor, 15 opposed. "That's what majority rule is about", Catherine thought. "You win some and you lose some."

Many political education programs that focus on citizenship are concerned with these types of situations. Some programs aim to teach students how to make better individual decisions in voting or supporting a candidate. Many new political action programs aid students who, like Catherine McGuire, need training in making more informed decisions about their political activities.

Other political education programs focus largely on group processes. Students study how national and local government institutions function. Many courses try to promote an understanding of how the system works and how groups make choices. In these cases, learning about how political groups like the Central City Council make decisions becomes an important focus for instruction.

Few programs have attempted to combine both goals and aid individuals like Catherine McGuire to see the relationship between their own individual interests and how group processes work. In the commentary above, Catherine voted based on her own personal values. She saw that group decision-making in the Central City Council produced a school policy which she personally preferred. The same Council failed to support her preference for building low-income housing. If she had considered both her own interests and the group's decision-making process, she might have voted differently. She could have voted more meaningfully for Elliot Baines and promoted new schools and housing. In effect, her voting decision was not hers to make alone. How she voted was only one part of a larger political process in Central City.

It is the goal of the Comparing Political Experiences (CPE) program to promote citizen competency in making decisions which include consideration of both individual preferences and group processes. The program is designed to combine political knowledge, skills and participation experiences in order to achieve this goal. The instructional materials include two semesters of course work for twelfth grade high school students. The Political Systems semester focuses on key concepts such as political systems, experiences, resources and activities. It also presents basic skills in analyzing political life and participating in political groups. The Political Issues semester offers an in-depth study of four common political experiences and an opportunity for students to extend and refine their skills. If the

program proves successful, students should be able to transfer ideas and experiences from the CPE course into a variety of political settings in which they operate everyday.

Rationale for the CPE Program

Developing the Comparing Political Experiences program is the major activity of the High School Political Science Curriculum Project.* The project began in March of 1972 with the aim of designing, developing and testing an alternative to existing twelfth grade politics courses in high schools. The first year of funding was spent largely in developing a rationale for the program. One initial question concerned the requisites for achieving the goal of effective political participation. Two major requisites were surfaced. Students need to be politically competent. They need to have the knowledge, skills, and participation training essential for effective political participation. Second, they need to have some direct political participation experiences which will give them practice in forming habits of effective participation. The diagram on the following page demonstrates the relationship between political competencies, political participation experiences and the general goal of effective political participation.

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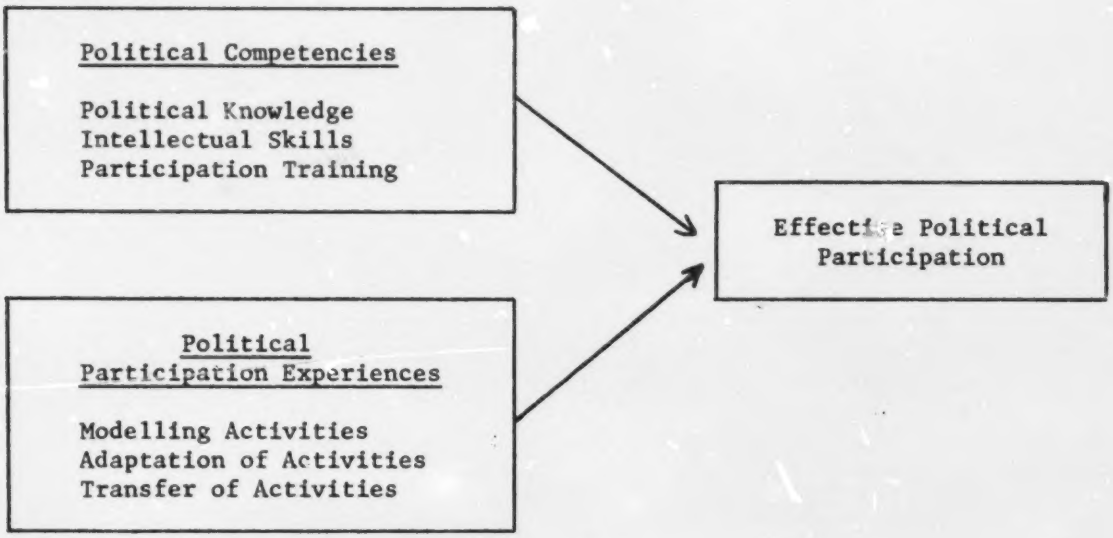
* The High School Political Science Curriculum Project is sponsored by the American Political Science Association's Committee on Pre-Collegiate Education. Funds for the project are provided by the National Science Foundation. The Social Studies Development Center at Indiana University hosts the project.



Political competencies include three major dimensions: political knowledge, intellectual skills, and participation training. All three are necessary for the achievement of general political competence. Each of us knows someone who is knowledgeable about politics, but is also a demagogue. Some people are good at making arguments and presenting evidence, but they also cannot participate with others in achieving political goals. The aim of the program is to promote the achievement of all three competencies simultaneously.

Political Knowledge. Political knowledge contributes to general political competency in a variety of ways. In the CPE course, students acquire knowledge about a systemic perspective for viewing political life, alternative types of political organization, and political experiences which are common in local, national, and international political units. This knowledge promotes an information base for making sound decisions, an ability to distinguish behavior appropriate to different

types of political situations, and a sense of the dynamics of change in any ongoing political group.

Throughout the CPE program, students acquire specific knowledge about major variables which affect the quality and pulse of political life. They learn how political resources such as status, wealth, skills, information and ideas affect political processes in different types of systems. They also learn how political activities such as decision-making, leadership, participation and communication affect how systems operate. Each of these variables are studied so that students can see how they contribute to fundamental political experiences of maintenance, change, development and conflict.

DIMENSIONS OF POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE
Systemic Perspective
Political Resources
Political Experiences
Alternative Types of Political Systems

Another key to knowledge competency in the CPE program is learning about alternative forms of political organization. The course focuses on political units which stretch from political groups in schools to those in local communities, nations, and international organizations. High schools in the United States become a focus for analysis for the course. So do the city of Chicago, the United States, China and other national systems as well as international systems such as NATO. The comparative format of the course encourages students to see and understand alternative forms of political organization. When they enter a group, they can see which of the range of types of political systems best fits the group in which they are participating and adjust their behavior.

Intellectual Skill and Participation Training Competencies. When effective political participation is a goal of a program, political knowledge promotes that goal only if it can be appropriately organized and applied. Intellectual skills such as question-asking, comparison, and evidence-gathering are taught in the CPE program to enhance students' abilities to organize knowledge. Skills such as survey research and interviewing are methods students use in gathering their own information to support their ideas about political groups. Participation training is offered to encourage knowledge application.

One example of how students use intellectual skills can be found in a section of the program about political resources. Students first learn to ask questions which help them to determine what political resources exist in a political system. They then form some hypotheses about how resources might affect political change or conflict experiences in the system. Finally, they develop a survey instrument in order to find out people's perceptions about resources in their school or community. Through lessons such as these, students learn to ask questions in any political setting and gather information which will allow them to understand how a group functions.

Students also learn skills in moral reasoning. They gain practice in identifying the ethical characteristics of political situations, deciding the actions major political actors in the situations should pursue, giving reasons for the positions they take, and revising their position based on discussion with others. The use of moral reasoning skills is essential to student consideration of both how they will act as individuals and what group goals they will support.

Two types of participation skills are highlighted in the course. Students are given training in role behavior. They begin by recognizing that they are each political actors in their own everyday lives. Students then learn about observer, supporter, advocate, facilitator and organizer roles. The CPE program focuses on each of these roles in different units of the course material, building successively upon past experience to include more initiative and to encourage effective student participation in groups. Practice in each of these roles should promote the self-confidence necessary for students to feel comfortable acting in political situations. Over time, students should be able to take on a variety of political roles as naturally as they perform work at their jobs or socialize with other students.

In another type of participation training, students learn about decision-making, bargaining, task implementation, and conflict management. For example, students need to learn not only how to recognize decision-making processes, but how to participate in making group decisions as well. Therefore, classroom simulations are developed in order for students to learn how to make decisions under controlled conditions. Various rounds of the simulations illustrate different group organization and processes. Training in each of these specific political skills will aid students in practicing participation behavior common to many political groups.

Intellectual and participation skills taught in the course are summarized on the following page.

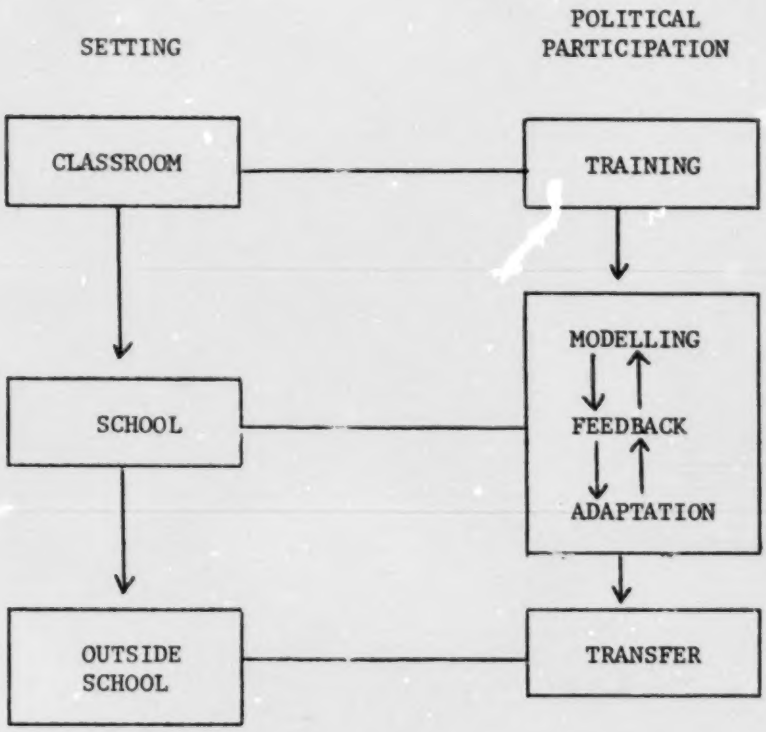
INTELLECTUAL SKILLS	PARTICIPATION TRAINING
I. ANALYTICAL SKILLS QUESTION-ASKING EVIDENCE GATHERING HYPOTHESIS TESTING COMPARISON ALTERNATIVE FUTURES	I. ROLE TRAINING OBSERVER SUPPORTER ADVOCATE FACILITATOR ORGANIZER
II. MORAL REASONING SKILLS	II. SKILL TRAINING DECISION-MAKING BARGAINING CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TASK IMPLEMENTATION
III. METHODOLOGICAL SKILLS SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION SURVEY RESEARCH INTERVIEWING	

Each of these skills are integrated into the curriculum materials along with political knowledge competencies.

Political Participation Experiences. Anyone who learned to drive a car in a simulated classroom driver-trainer appreciates the significance of someone's first experience on the road. Highway traffic is often unpredictable and good driving requires a good instructor. When supervision is completed, it is again a new experience to drive alone. Rules seem to fade into habits of good or bad driving. The process of developing effective political participation skills is much like learning to drive. Both require training, guided experience in ongoing situations, and judgment which comes from forming habits of behavior.

The successful development of effective participation habits is a problem which has no simple solutions. In the CPE program, such habits are promoted in three ways: 1) providing appropriate settings for skill development; 2) creating mechanisms for feedback on performance; and 3) involving students in a process of modelling,

adapting and transferring participation skills. The rationale for participation experiences in the course can be outlined as follows:



Classrooms often provide appropriate settings for training students in role behavior and specific political skills. Modelling and adaptation activities require a larger, "real" political arena. Schools provide relatively controlled, continuous, and varied situations for carrying out these activities. School clubs, sports teams, and peer groups constitute settings for modelling and adapting a variety of participant roles and skills. They are readily available to students. Through peer evaluation, students also can also gain valuable feedback as they practice skills in ongoing political situations.

In the CPE program, students use the school as a political laboratory for engaging in participation experiences. For example, a student who has been trained in the classroom to perform an advocate role finds a relevant school group and arranges to model, or act out, this role in an ongoing meeting of that group. A peer is assigned to observe the advocate, and provides valuable feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of the student's performance.

Once they are proficient in modelling a role or a skill, students then learn to adapt it to fit a variety of specific situations. For example, they can practice advocate roles in formally organized school committees and in informal peer groups. Through successive practice, they learn to adjust their behavior in order to effectively participate in many different settings. Finally, they begin to transfer successful participation habits beyond their school experience to communities, work settings, and other political situations.

Instructional Methods. An important part of developing the rationale for the CPE course has involved the choice and design of instructional methods. The developers could not hope to achieve their goals without thinking carefully about how lessons would be sequenced and implemented. Three major methods were chosen: 1) promoting perceived purpose; 2) emphasizing instructional variety; and, 3) facilitating transfer of training.

Promoting perceived purpose involves an effort to insure student understanding of the objectives of instruction. Students need to see that whenever they learn knowledge or skill competencies, the purpose of learning them is to apply them to political settings. The goals of the course might be lost unless objectives are directly stated and students understand that linkages need to be made between knowledge, skills and participation in political groups.

The course also needs to support instructional variety. It needs to be visually oriented and requires integration of pictures with prose. If the course is to promote political competence in the average citizen, then instruction must be interesting and visual in order for average students to be at ease learning about political concepts and skills. Throughout the course, audio-visual elements have been stressed through slide-tapes, audio productions and graphics in the text.

Throughout the CPE program, students consistently engage in active learning. For example, they read a case and immediately respond to the material through discussion or programmed exercises. They also extend their knowledge by applying it to new material. In short, they practice using their knowledge in active and appropriate ways to ensure mastery of an idea or skill. When practice also leads to the use of knowledge in either subsequent lessons or new out-of-class settings, then transfer of training has occurred. This type of transfer is a key to the success of the course.

The political competencies, participation experiences and instructional methods which constitute the heart of the CPE program make it highly experimental. Integrated together, they should aid in promoting the general goal of effective political participation. Some of the ways in which the rationale is implemented in the instructional materials are described in the following paragraphs.

The Curriculum Materials

The two semesters of Comparing Political Experiences can be combined to form a year-long course in government. Political Systems

serves as the first semester and Political Issues acts as the second. With the addition of an introductory unit, Political Issues can also be taught as a separate course and stands as an alternative to problems of democracy, comparative politics, or other twelfth grade electives. The materials are also flexible enough to be combined internally to form a semester course which mixes materials from across the program.

In Political Systems, the basic concepts, skills and participation experiences of the course are presented. There are three units of material in the semester: "Observing Political Systems", "Using Political Resources", and "Participating in Political Activities". The units consist of a student book and a teacher's guide as well as a wide range of audio-visual materials.

Political Systems is based on an instructional sequence of concept learning, skill development, and application through participation experience. The units are sequenced to produce a systematic linkage between these three elements. Students first learn about concepts. Then they learn some basic skills which promote their use of the concepts in analyzing everyday political life. Finally, they learn participation skills and practice them in relevant political settings. This linkage is the heart of the instruction.

POLITICAL SYSTEMS
Observing Political Systems
Using Political Resources
Participating in Political Activities

Perhaps the easiest way to view the instructional material is to think about a typical unit. One such unit is Unit One, "Observing Political Systems". In the first section of this unit, students learn

about the basic concepts of "system" and "political system". They view a slide-tape focusing on these concepts, and respond to exercises requiring them to demonstrate mastery of the ideas. Students then learn about a particular type of political system, a coalitional system. Finally, extensive case material on the battle over war powers in the United States Congress highlights how a specific coalitional system experiences political change.

Students also learn intellectual skills. They practice making comparisons, develop skills in systematic observation and construct an observation record. The purpose of these lessons is to aid students in recognizing the value of systematic inquiry of various kinds by practicing that inquiry with an observation record. Finally, students acquire knowledge about the participant role of observer. They see how observers act in everyday political groups and the functions that observers serve. A role play exercise is introduced which involves both playing observer roles and engaging in systematic observation activities. This is an in-class training exercise for learning about observer roles. Finally, students act as observers in political groups in their school, work setting, or local community.

Political Issues offers an extension of many ideas from Political Systems and a complementary instruction design. It provides an in-depth study of the four major political experiences of the course: political maintenance, change, development and conflict. The semester focuses on questions of why and how these experiences come about. Throughout the Political Issues course, students study five units of material, each focusing on one of the political experiences. The first unit is designed

as a comicbook, "Save the System!". The comicbook introduces major concepts in the course through a self-paced, programmed instruction format. The four remaining units are: 1) "Busing in Boston", focusing on the conflict experience; 2) "Clean Air Now", centering on political change with reference to the smog issue; 3) "Union Underground", concentrating on the United Mine Workers and its maintenance under John L. Lewis; and 4) "Jobs and Engines", outlining the development of Cummins Engine Company as a multi-national corporation.

Throughout the semester, four issues of busing, smog, union membership and job security are used in a documentary format as the base for the development of concepts, skills and related participation experiences. A typical unit in Political Issues is the "Busing in Boston" unit. Students are first introduced to the concept of conflict through an audio-tape constructed from first-hand interviews gathered during the busing controversy. They explore what conflict is and why it occurs in a political system. They then apply their knowledge to four cases on busing in Detroit, the Equal Rights Amendment, the Crosstown Expressway case in Chicago, and the debate over the price of oil in OPEC. Students study conflict in these four political settings and gain comparative knowledge of how conflict occurs in a wide variety of political situations.

POLITICAL ISSUES
Save the System!
Busing in Boston
Clean Air Now
Union Underground
Jobs and Engines

Students then return to the documentary and study the history of the busing issue in Boston through a photochronology. The photochronology juxtaposes a description of events in Boston from 1964 to 1975 against a set of pictures which are taken from significant incidents in that decade. Students study how inequality and competition affect political conflict through the photochronology. They then develop skills in comparative analysis and in evidence gathering by studying a "data packet" which includes information from a wide variety of conflict cases. Finally, they use interview material on a decision made by a student in South Boston as a springboard for practicing participation skills.

Throughout this part of the unit, the documentary on Boston serves as a foundation for learning concepts, explanations of conflict, and fundamental skills as well as a handle for introducing participation experiences. When they have finished the unit, students have an in-depth knowledge of political conflict and a set of concrete data to which they can relate their ideas. They should also be able to apply what they learn in this unit to other political settings.

Both Political Issues and Political Systems serve the general goal of promoting effective political participation. Both focus on basic knowledge and skill competencies necessary for obtaining this goal. Used together, the courses provide an opportunity for students to form habits of participation which carry over into their everyday lives beyond the boundaries of the course.

The Curriculum Development Process

CPE is an alternative. It is also experimental. As a result, the developers are committed to extensive field testing, evaluation,

and diffusion of ideas about the program. Without extensive field testing, CPE materials could remain locked in a university center because they failed the reality test of workability in high school classrooms. Likewise, systematic evaluation provides important data for continuous revisions of the materials. The developers need to know more than whether materials work or fail. They must also know why materials affect students differentially in order to make meaningful revisions. Finally, activities which spread ideas about the program are essential in familiarizing potential users of the course with the ideas and methods behind the program. These three activities are an integral part of the curriculum development process.

Main Procedures of
Curriculum Development

10. Difussion occurs at each of these stages.

1. Conceptualization of instructional product.
2. Creating prototype instructional materials according to the conceptualization.
3. Testing prototypes.
4. Creating a complete unit or course in accord with modifications of prototypes.
5. Testing the unit or course.
6. Revising the unit or course on basis of testing.
7. Validating the program through final field test.
8. Producing the commercial version of the instructional materials for publishers and the final report of the project.
9. Helping users to install and use the published instructional materials.

11. Evaluation occurs at each of these stages.

The first stage of the process involves the conceptualization of a program. In the case of CPE, the first year of the project was spent at this stage. From this point, field testing began. CPE went through three steps in field testing materials. Nine short, self-contained prototype units were developed. These units represented possible alternative ways to approach concept learning, skill training and participation activities. Based on findings about the strengths and weaknesses of the prototypes, Political Systems was developed as a one-semester course. It was field-tested in 1974-75.

During 1975, the developers revised Political Systems and designed a new semester, Political Issues. Both courses are being tested during the 1975-76 school year. Information from this test will lead to revisions necessary for publication. In each step of the field test, there has been a continuous effort to try out new ideas, refine old ones, and throw out weak materials in concert with information gained in the field.

Over two dozen pilot schools across the nation serve as test sites for the program. These schools are selected to fit a number of criteria. First of all, they are regionally distributed across the United States. Secondly, the schools reflect a variety of sizes and degrees of urbanization. The schools also reflect different socio-economic and racial mixes. Finally, schools which exhibit different types of political organization are included. The developers want to see whether or not the school participation laboratory works in elite, bureaucratic and coalitional as well as participant types of school systems. All of these variables together contribute a rich variety of schools working with the CPE field test.

Throughout the field-test period, extensive evaluation work has been done. The design for the evaluation calls for formative evaluation which provides feedback for developers as well as a validation study which compares the impact of the course to that of other high school government programs. The evaluation has continuously focused on four interrelated measures of the program: 1) achievement tests; 2) student and teacher reaction questionnaires; 3) site observations; and, 4) advice from expert consultants.

During the 1974-75 school year, developers will use the services of National Evaluation Systems in Amherst, Massachusetts for the design and analysis of achievement tests. NES will conduct both a formative and a validation study of student achievement from both the Political Systems and the Political Issues semesters of the CPE course. This evaluation should pinpoint strengths and weaknesses by analysis of mastery tests for each unit of the program. It should also indicate how CPE results compare to those of other programs used in control groups which are part of the validation study.

Data is also gathered on student backgrounds. Questionnaires and intelligence tests are given to students. Developers have a special interest in whether or not CPE is achieving its goal of being a course for the average citizen in a political system. Background data can be related to achievement data and give some important knowledge about how socio-economic

EVALUATION METHODS
Achievement Tests
Background Profiles
Reaction Questionnaires
Site Observations
Expert Review

status, general intelligence and other background variables relate to students' mastery of the CPE materials.

The developers are also interested in student and teacher reactions to the course. After each unit, students are given a reaction questionnaire which taps their affective reactions to the course. They are asked whether they found the course difficult, whether they enjoyed specific aspects of the units, and whether they are maintaining interest in the course as a whole. The teachers are asked to react to the instructional sequence and the teacher directions. They are asked to evaluate each unit in terms of how workable they found it as well as how they felt students reacted. These reaction questionnaires provide valuable data for revision of the materials.

Site observations provide a unique and rich source of information about the program. In the 1974-75 pilot testing, all pilot schools were visited at least once during the year. Site observations normally last about three days. A developer goes to the site and talks to the teacher, attends classes and sees how specific lessons are being taught. When the site observation is completed, the entire staff talks about what was observed and ways that problems can be remedied. These site observations have proved to be one of the most significant parts of the evaluation.

In addition to conclusions drawn from its own evaluation measures, the staff also seeks the advice of expert consultants in political science and in social education in order to solicit specific comments on the content and instructional design of the materials. These expert consultants often write critiques as well as come together for meetings

in order to discuss the materials. Consultants' comments have provided input which is directly visible in program revisions.

As field-testing and evaluation have progressed, project staff have attempted to diffuse ideas about the program. Staff members have written professional papers, attended conventions, and demonstrated materials at meetings of teachers and professionals in the field. This effort has been directed toward spreading information about the project and culling reactions to ongoing curriculum development activities. These diffusion activities are not intended to "sell" the product as much as to solicit advice and develop the groundwork for thinking about the teaching of politics in alternative ways.

This year the project staff has initiated a series of six diffusion conferences. These six conferences form a program called "Conferences on Comparing Political Experiences". The conferences are designed to bring together political scientists, social studies educators and curriculum decision-makers who wish to learn about the program and to give feedback about the potential use of the program in schools across the United States.

Field-testing, evaluation, and diffusion are all highly interrelated in the CPE project. The more interactive these activities are, the better the Comparing Political Experiences will be as a published product. The staff has attempted throughout the life of the project to undertake each of these three activities simultaneously. Hopefully, the product will be measurably better as a result.

Conclusion: Looking to the Future

CPE is still in its developmental stages. Most of the 1975-76 school year will be spent in field-testing and further revision of the materials. However, contacts will be made with publishers and the project will begin to take on some new directions.

Formative evaluation will be completed. Evaluation work will continue in two dimensions. The developers plan for some agency to support a summative evaluation utilizing the published version of the materials. This will enable a determination to be made about student achievement, workability, and interest using the final products of the project. Follow-up research is also being planned which will involve tracing students who take the course into communities, work settings and colleges after they complete their senior year. This type of study will underline the extent to which transfer of knowledge, skills, and habits of participation occur because of CPE instruction.

New and different development work will also begin. Teacher education materials need to be developed. Experimental programs have often developed teacher education packages because of new content and instructional methods which are unfamiliar to many teachers. CPE has some special reasons for requiring such materials. The school political laboratory requires a teacher to manage instructional activities beyond the boundaries of a classroom. Teachers will assume management roles in organizing laboratory activities. In so doing, they themselves will be political actors. The teacher education materials will be designed to aid teachers in performing this role.

The project will also continue to engage in diffusion activities. There is continued interest and need to spread ideas and seek advice. However, at this stage of the project, a new audience becomes a focus for diffusion. Curriculum decision-makers need to know about the program so that it can be visible in their curriculum planning. Trainers of teachers need to be identified so that the program can be successfully implemented in school systems. These audiences become important targets for diffusion activities. They also provide important sources of ideas and feedback for the implementation of the program.

Ideally, there will be two general outcomes from the project. First, the materials will provide a useful alternative for classroom teachers seeking a different type of government program. Second, the hypotheses that have been tested about curriculum design and evaluation will aid others in developing better curriculum materials. Whether or not these outcomes are wishes or realities remains an open question. The answers lie in the not-too-distant future.